

Super mom juggles family, writing and activism too

By SARAH COUGHLIN, CLIPPER CONTRIBUTOR

As an active member of the Duxbury community, published author, and busy mother of three, Jen Klein is as upbeat and energetic as her three children. We recently caught up with this Duxbury devotee to find out how she manages it all.

What sparked your interest in becoming involved with Duxbury's schools? With kids in the system, I've had an interest because of them. I had some time and felt I have some skills that could be beneficial. I think it's our responsibility as a society to provide the best learning environment for our children; we need to find ways to make sure they are leaders in the community.



Jen Klein recently published her first book "The Mommy Files." She also writes for the Web site sheknows.com and is involved with the schools.

JEN KLEIN

Family: Husband, Andreas; son, Aaron (14); son, Piers (11); daughter, Greta (6)

Favorite Movie: "Casablanca"

Favorite Book: "Angle of Repose" by Wallace Stegner

Hobby: Knitting, photography, printmaking

Pet Peeve: Mixing up they're, there, and their

To which organizations do you devote your time? I am a member of the Alden School Council, the School Health Advisory Committee and was a member of the Start Time Implementation Committee (that disbanded last June). I am also heavily involved with the proposed new school building project.

What's the most fulfilling part of your work? I get to interact with some really great people in this town. I really respect and appreciate the commitment and passion people have for where we live.

The hardest part? Trying to juggle it all. It's always difficult, in busy moments, to prioritize. Is laundry the priority? Well yes, some days it is.

Have your children learned from your commitment to the community? Yes, to a certain extent. I am trying to balance my involvement with the schools and not embarrass my son (in high school) too much. It's a lead by example situation. I tell them you have to be the change that you want to see in the world, that they're part of something bigger.

Tell us about how your book, "The Mommy Files," came to life? The whole genesis of the book started when I was pregnant with my first child, which was back in the early ages of

the World Wide Web. I found myself online with a group of expectant mothers who were all due around the same time as me. I became friends with two of these ladies who ended up starting their own Web site for women — sheknows.com. Three years ago, I started writing for that Web site and established a relationship with a publishing house. They eventually proposed I write my own book for mothers.

How did you find the time to write? After the kids were in bed, I'd sit down and get to work. My husband was great — making coffee, reading my work, etc. I also had a lot of help and insight from friends.

Were you able to be as creative as you wanted? They (the Publishing House) wanted to focus more on pregnancy up to children age 3; we went back and forth on issues mommies might face with different age groups. I finally submitted a detailed outline, covering lots of topics. There is no instruction manual for raising kids and my main message is "It's going to be OK." It's intended to be a reassuring, fairly light read with maybe a few laughs thrown in.

As a first time author, was the writing process daunting or did it come naturally? It was a very compressed cycle; I signed the contract in July 2009 and turned in the first draft in October. I am a technical writer by trade and definitely found that experience helped.

As if she couldn't fit any more onto her very full plate, Klein has ambitions to utilize her art degree and start producing and selling her printmaking work. She continues to write about parenting and food for sheknows.com, and hopes the proposed new school project will indeed become a reality.

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